Anti-Slavery Office,
118 New York, 18 July, 1864.

My Dear Garrison,

The unprecedented increase in the price of paper, labor, and almost everything else that enters into the production of newspapers, leads me to fear that the burden of supporting the Liberator and Standard will shortly become too heavy to be borne by their friends; and any fear is augmented in view of the division of opinion that prevails in our ranks. I have asked myself, again and again, with no little anxiety, if there is any way by which we can ~~[illegible]~~ surely avert the necessity of stopping one or both of these papers. If slavery were really abolished, we might disband the Am. Society and

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stop the Standard, not only without regret but with demonstrations of joy. But the time for doing this has evidently not come; if it is stopped at all, it will be from necessity, and such an ending I should greatly lament. How the Liberator is affected, or is likely to be, by the turn of the times, I do not know; but I shall be greatly surprised if you do not ere long find its receipts inadequate to its support. If both papers should fall into pecuniary embarrassment at the same time, an issue would be presented which we should all lament. Is there no plan by which the danger of such a catastrophe may be averted without very serious detriment to the cause? The subject has been on my mind for some

time past, and I have concluded to name a project which seems to me quite feasible, provided it shall meet with your assent.

My project is simply a union of the two papers, under the name of "The Liberator and Anti-Slavery Standard." The combination of the two subscription-lists would, it seems to me, support one paper handsomely; at any rate, the burden of supporting one would be much less than that of sustaining both. I would have the paper printed in New York, but published in Boston as well as here, retaining your name as a "Special Contributor," with the understanding that you are to write every week, or nearly so, and be paid the same salary that you would have as Editor of the Liberator. You would thus

be relieved at once from ~~the~~ the minor responsibilities of ~~the~~ editorship and from the ~~mechanical~~ drudgery which now absorbs so much of your precious time and strength, and which are every year becoming more irksome. You would be able to devote yourself to deliberate & careful writing upon ~~the~~ topics which would claim your attention, and which your long experience eminently fits you to elucidate. I suppose you are not ignorant of the fact that many of the best and most intelligent of your friends have lamented for years that you write so little for the Liberator, and that you suffer yourself to be absorbed in labors which ought to be performed by others. The new arrangement would take you out of your old ruts at once, and leave you time and strength for the work

for which you are specially fitted, and which nobody else can do as well as you can. Nothing could so strengthen the paper as the announcement that you would write regularly for it over your own signature; and this feature, added to the present attractions of the Standard, would, I am almost sure, make the enterprise a complete success.

Of course you would lose the opportunity you now enjoy of discussing topics not embraced in the anti-slavery platform; but, in the present state of the country, and while the slavery question remains unsettled, I do not think you would find that restriction practically irksome, especially as journals are plenty in which your thoughts on any subject would be welcome. Besides, the new arrangement

is likely to be terminated in two or three years by the complete overthrow of Slavery and the dissolution of the Anti-Slavery Society; and then the good-will of the paper might revert to you for any use which the altered condition of the country and your own inclination might suggest. If you were disposed to resume the publication of the Liberator, and to devote it to other reforms, it seems to me you would take a fresh start under very encouraging auspices, and after a period of rest from labors by which you have so long been confined. The care of the Liberator at present, while your wife is ill and in need of constant attention, and you have no one to whom

you can turn for such aid as you require, is a burden which, at your time of life, you ought not to bear. Such labor in your hands is a power in spite of all drawbacks, but it does seem to me that you could more efficiently serve the anti-slavery cause for one, two, or three years, by writing carefully and consistently in a paper not under your exclusive control, than by dissipating your strength in such various labors as you must endure if you go on as at present. The union of the two papers, with the announcement that you, released from all the petty cares and details of editorial life, would be a constant contributor and adviser,

would, I am sure, awaken a new and very strong interest in the public mind, and enable us to produce a journal better than either the Liberator or the Standard has been or can be under present arrangements. And there would be great advantage in taking the steps in advance of the period when that or something else will be forced us upon us the alternative of utter failure.

I have thus opened to you, for your consideration, a plan which has occupied much of my thought for some time past. Pray look it squarely in the face, and tell me what you think of it. If you and I can can agree to it, I am sure the Executive Committee would gladly consent, and

that the details might be so adjusted as to satisfy all parties.

With kindest regards for Mrs. Garrison and the other members of your household, I remain, my dear Garrison,

Your attached friend,

Andrew Johnson.